

Mrs Beverley Redlich
(...)



5th March 2011

To Whom It May Concern

Re: Senate Inquiry into Commonwealth contribution to former forced adoption policies and practices.

I Beverley Redlich (Bennett) am a citizen of the Commonwealth of Australia, resident of New South Wales.

As a citizen of the Commonwealth of Australia I have every right to protection under the Australian Constitution and the Common Law of this country. As an Australian citizen, the Commonwealth affords me protection from the unlawful and harmful actions that threaten my right to life, liberty and justice from those who would deny me these rights, within and without, the borders of Australia.

My Story:

In 1965 I was sent to "Carramar" Church of England Home for Unwed Mothers situated in Boomerang Street Turrumurra Sydney. I did not go there on my own freewill. I was woken that morning apparently I must have been drugged by my mother with a sleeping pill or similar, as I did not come around till I was shaken awake by a Preacher from Taree Methodist (now Uniting) Church, (...). As we were parked in the driveway facing a 2 story older style building I asked him "Where are we?" and he said "This is a home for girls who are pregnant like you to stay till they have their babies". I was terrified as he led me to the door to be met by a stern looking woman who led me inside. Fear has caused me to forget the finer details of what exactly happened next but I vaguely remember being taken upstairs to a room were I would stay till my baby was born on (...) July 1965.

The father of my baby, a 20year old Macedonian, (...), wanted to marry me. I had left Newcastle and returned to Taree to

make wedding plans only to receive a letter from (...) stating he'd already left Newcastle after being coerced by his mother and the Macedonian community to fly away so he couldn't be found by me. This is why I had no intentions of having my much loved and wanted baby adopted out. I knew he would come back.

(...) and I had been courting for one year and were inseparable. We were engaged, he had kept our courtship secret to his family as he had a wife chosen by them, whom, if I remember rightly lived in Victoria, but he loved me. It was only two weeks off our marriage when (...) left because of his family pressure

My parents told me I couldn't keep the baby and my mother apparently told many people who offered to help me to "keep out of it" – so I was told over the years following my son's birth.

In the Church of England Home, not once was it suggested us girls any avenue of help. We were told constantly we would be wrong to keep our babies. We were told our babies would be called "bastards" by the neighbours and the public if we dared to keep them.

No financial support such as pensions or cheap housing was offered to us and we were made to feel like "cheap girls", shunned by a very narrow minded society and forever looked on as "black sheep" by our families. We were brainwashed against keeping our babies by a cold uncaring Matron and staff.

I have endured much hardship and rejection because I was forced by a Church Home to loose my son. Were they Christians?

At the birth of my baby I was rushed to Hornsby Hospital where I was treated with disdain once again for being an unwed mother. I was gruffly ushered into the labor ward and virtually told to hurry up and have the baby. The nursing sister told me to hurry up and push the baby out so a decent married mother could have my bed. This caused me to have 12 stitches where I was badly torn.

As soon as the baby was born a nurse bought him towards me wrapped in a bunny rug and was screamed at by the nursing sister to get that baby out of here it's for adoption. He was hurriedly put into a crib and pushed quickly out the door, and that was all I ever saw of him. I was stitched up with no compassion whatsoever then rushed

to a ward where three other unwed mums were right opposite the nursery. In this ward we were able to hear our babies crying for their feed while the others had been taken to their mothers, as babies were only out of the nursery at feed time. They demanded that we did not get out of bed to try to see them. Social workers constantly told us that we were not to keep our babies and any attempt to leave the hospital with our babies would result in the "Welfare" being called and the babies taken off us. We were also told that we would be hurting the adopted parents if we changed our mind. We were given a tablet by the Sister and told it would calm us down so it wouldn't hurt when we were taken to sign the papers. I insisted I still wanted to keep my baby but was yelled at by the Social Worker time and time again. She even went so far as to ring my father in Taree to tell me not to take the baby home. I was called to the phone to speak to my father, he was crying "please don't do this to me". I had never heard or seen my father cry and this impacted me greatly.

All doors were slamming in my face and all hope was gone. I was led in to sign the papers, drugged and too shocked and distressed to even read them. A man behind the desk pointed to where I was to sign the adoption papers and I was led quickly back to my room where the Matron of the Children's Home picked me up and took me back to the Home. Here I was ushered in to a room where Matron said "I suppose you want to know what the parents are like", and she produced a folder containing their details.

Several days later after leaving the Home the pain of losing my baby was unbearable. I rang the Home and said I wanted my baby back and was told that he was already with the adopted parents. I told them "I will find my baby as I had seen the address on the front of the folder". Matron said "I will tell them to move". My mother then rang soon after we returned to Taree and was told that the baby was jaundiced, very ill and had been sent to another hospital and was probably dead.

No form of counselling for post traumatic stress was offered. We were expected to "shut-up and get on with our lives". Not one person ever asked how I felt. I cried non-stop for nine years. It was no different to the death of a child, in fact it was worse as someone else had him and I didn't know how they were treating him. I also insisted that he be told he was adopted as soon as possible. This was not carried out. I also told them I did not want him adopted into a foreign

family because of the treatment I'd received from the Macedonia family and community. Many years later I have become aware that none of my requests were carried out.

Shortly after returning to Taree I felt so rejected by the family and returned to Newcastle where I met (...) who had returned from Queensland. We cried together over the loss of our son and decided to defy his family and mine and have another child. So we eloped and got married. Fourteen months later our second child was born.

Only recently I was told by Origins NSW Incorporated that we could have claimed our baby back after we had signed the Papers. Also I was told by them that we were to have been given paperwork in regard to changing our mind before we signed the Adoption Papers but we never were. This had a devastating affect on me knowing I'd been lied to. I wish to tell you also that the adoption, I believe, resulted not only in causing the divorce between (...) and I because of lack of grief counselling but also resulted in him having his first stroke at the age of 21 and numerous others after that resulting in his death at 37 years of age. The adoption caused me to have anorexia, another miscarriage and two broken marriages due to the intense emotional pain caused by the loss of my son, (...)

My son, (...) is now 45 years old. I have only met him twice though he is close to his full blood sister (...) who was born the following year. He still says to his sister "She was the one who picked the pen up" (relating to me signing the Adoption papers). How can we expect him to understand the barbaric system of that time? How can we expect my children and grandchildren to understand when it is an accepted thing by today's standards for unmarried mums to keep their babies, they are given a pension by the Government and housing and then can go home to have one or two more.

I am now 66 and after 46 years of residing in Sydney and Newcastle have returned to Taree, my town of birth from whence I was sent to Sydney in 1965. I still feel my family and many relatives who reside here looking down their noses at me – the stigma and shame of being an unwed mum is still hovering over my head all these years later.

How can I expect (...) who was stolen from me, to believe me, when society now has fallen into immorality and decay. In those days our Churches were overflowing with people as the memories of WW2

and Hitler had not been erased by materialism and greed as it is now. I am not a materialistic woman but I state powerfully and strongly, us mums who were treated in such a barbaric and draconian manner demand an inquiry into the laws of that era and most definitely ask for substantial compensation to be given for the pain and suffering and rejection by family and society at the stigma that has followed us for a lifetime since. I believe this is a judgement by God on our Government and the churches and those who instigated these atrocities on us.

I attach a document forwarded to me re the top eight countries where the Australian Government sends our tax money. I feel strongly this should be spent on compensating us along with the farmers and flood victims, pensioners and not sent overseas.

Trust you will seriously consider what I have written and look forward to a favourable response.

Yours sincerely

Beverley Redlich